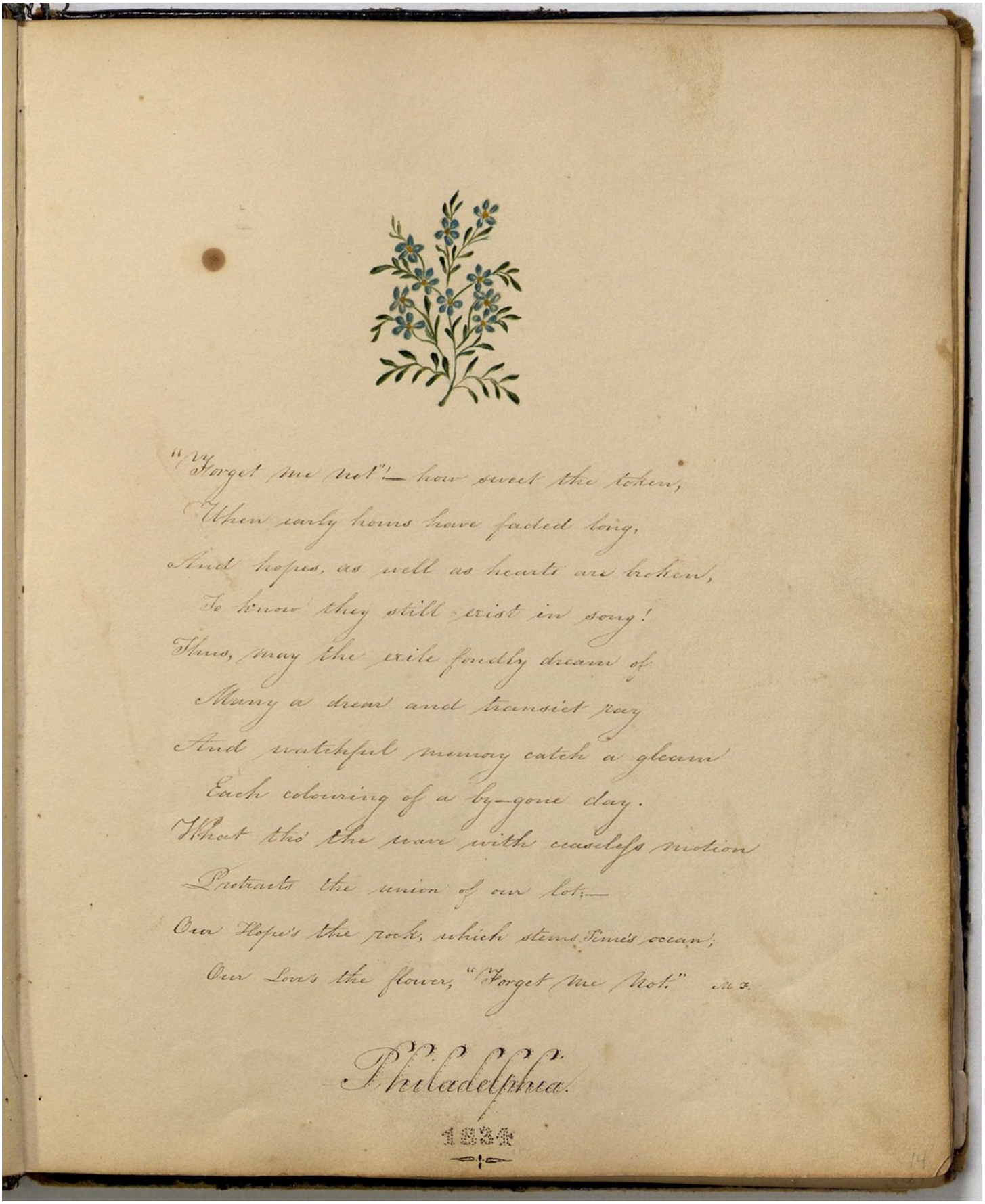
National Park Service

ARTICLE

"Forget Me Not" Poem, Philadelphia 1834

Independence National Historical Park (https://www.nps.gov/inde/)



"Forget me not"— how sweet the token,
When early hours have faded long,
And hopes, as well as hearts are broken,
To know they still exist in song!
Thus, may the exile fondly dream of
Many a dear and transient ray
And watchful memory catch a gleam
Each colouring of a by-gone day.
What tho' the wave with ceaseless motion
Protracts the union of our lot:—
Our Hope's the rock, which stems Time's ocean;
Our Love's the flower, "Forget me not." M. F.

Philadelphia.
1834

(https://digital.librarycompany.org/islandora/object/Islandora%3A64978)

In the early nineteenth-century United States, creators of friendship albums utilized sentimental literature to market to white American women and girls, ignoring Black American women and girls. Here in Amy Matilda Cassey's friendship album, sentimentality for a Black American girl is on full display in this handwritten poem from a person with the initials, M.F.

Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.

Title: "Forget Me Not" Poem, Philadelphia 1834

Date: 1834

Location: 113 Lombard Street (historic address), now north side of Lombard Street, between Third and Fourth Streets, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Object Information: Paper document

Repository: The Library Company of Philadelphia, Print Department, Amy Matilda Cassey album [P.9764.14], available through their digital collection (https://digital.librarycompany.org/islandora/object/Islandora%3A64978).

Description:

This is a page from Amy Matilda Cassey's Friendship Album most likely written by either Margaretta or Mary Forten, daughters of James Forten (https://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=28180E31-4AD6-4E66-B35C-9D87A30C0C67). Around the time of the creation of this poem, Amy Matilda Cassey was an activist in the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society (https://hsp.org/education/primary-sources/female-anti-slavery-society-seal) which highlighted education independence for Black people in Philadelphia. Her friendship album contained poems, essays, and art highlighting abolition, slavery, and love among other things pertinent to Black womanhood. It would have circulated among members of her social circle of free Black American and white American women and men from Boston to Baltimore. This page by M.F. featured a drawing of blue forget-me-not flowers and leaves, the subject of the poem, along with the handwritten poem, the word Philadelphia decorated with small ink dots, 1834 hand depicted in ink dots, and a small floral icon at the bottom of the page.

TRANSCRIPT

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Mellon Humanities Postdoctoral Fellowship

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TAGS

independence national historical park | invisible architects | african american history and culture | black history | antebellum era | historic philadelphia | amy matilda cassey | friendship album | women's history | poetry | woman writers | african american | primary source

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